

National Institutes of Health, "Report of Workshop on Respiratory Effects of Involuntary Smoke Exposure: Epidemiological Studies", December 1983, pp. 1-11.

SUMMARY: The 1979 Surgeon General's Report on smoking and health presented the available scientific evidence that links involuntary cigarette smoke exposure (passive smoking) to adverse health effects. Existing evidence suggests that children of parents who smoke have more bronchitis and pneumonia during the first year of life and that acute respiratory disease accounts for a higher number of restricted activity days and bed disability days in children whose families smoked than in those whose families did not. In adults, small airway function impairment equivalent to that observed in light smokers has been reported in adults who had never smoked or, lived with smokers but were only exposed to cigarette smoke in the work place. Results such as these need to be confirmed and validated. A number of studies involving large population groups are presently addressing the question of the effect of passive smoking on the respiratory system. However, these studies which are being carried out by at least three different groups, are employing different populations and methodologies and have led to varying conclusions.

An important goal of this workshop was to provide a common forum to these different groups of investigators, along with statisticians conversant with this area, so that the various study designs and results obtained so far could be reviewed in order to identify the probable reasons for differences. Other goals of the workshop were to develop guidelines for collection and analysis of epidemiologic data on the respiratory effects of passive smoking, and to make recommendations for future studies.

The participants included epidemiologists involved in three ongoing population studies of the effect of passive smoking on respiratory health, statisticians, and adult and pediatric pulmonary physicians. The presentations (see Appendix A for agenda) dealt with data from the three groups and methodologic issues relating to data collection and statistical analysis, as well as results of other relevant studies carried out both in the US and other countries. After the first day of formal presentations, the workshop participants (see Appendix B for the list of participants) were divided into smaller task groups, each of which addressed the issues of measuring smoke exposure, outcome variables, confounding variables, other statistical issues related to design and analysis, and the need for additional studies. The following is a summary of the presentations, discussions and recommendations of the task groups.

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